

## Listing of the Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A method of error protection in a network environment, said method comprising:
  - utilizing a link to establish communication between at least two communicating nodes in a network;
  - realizing ~~detecting an~~ a data error during communication between said at least two communicating nodes in a network, said nodes separated by a link;
  - providing an error indicator at said link when said data error is detected;
  - utilizing a blocking agent at said link to block ~~blocking further~~ communication between said at least two communicating nodes in response to said error indicator detected error;
  - providing a clearing indicator at said link when said data error is resolved; and
  - utilizing said blocking agent to unblock [[unblocking]] said blocked communication between said at least two communicating nodes in response to said clearing indicator[[,]] ~~provided said communicating nodes have resolved said detected error, wherein said communication between said nodes is re-enabled; and~~
  - setting a link usage indicator in a first storage element by each of said communicating nodes prior to communication therebetween, and wherein each of said communicating nodes has a corresponding position in said first storage element, and wherein said link usage indicator set by each of said nodes is relative to said corresponding position in said first storage element.
2. (Canceled)
3. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in Claim 1 further comprising:
  - ~~wherein said detection of said error causes a generation of an~~ utilizing an error bit as said error indicator, ~~said error indicator stored in a second storage element.~~
4. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in Claim 3 further comprising: comprises activating a
  - utilizing a link barrier as said blocking agent to provide said blocking of said communication between said at least two communicating nodes, ~~said blocking agent activated in response to said generation of said error indicator.~~
5. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in Claim 1 further comprising:

wherein said resolving of said detected data error is performed by at each of said at least two communicating nodes;

generating said clearing indicator at each of said at least two communicating nodes; and

providing said clearing indicator to said link from each of said at least two communicating nodes, and is in a manner appropriate for each node.

6. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in Claim 1 further ~~comprises comprising:~~

generating multiple clearing indicators by said at least two communicating nodes, wherein each of said at least two communicating nodes generates one of said multiple clearing indicators subsequent to its said resolving of said error, wherein each of said clearing indicators corresponds to an associated corresponding position relative to said at least two communicating nodes, and wherein each of said clearing indicators resets a link usage indicator set by each of said at least two communicating nodes.

7. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in Claim 1 wherein a [[said]] first storage element and a second storage element are disposed [[in]] at said link, said first storage element and said second storage element for maintaining a real-time error status of said at least two communicating nodes.

8. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in Claim 1 wherein a [[said]] first storage element and a second storage element are disposed [[in]] at each of said nodes, said first storage element and said second storage element for maintaining a real-time error status of said at least two communicating nodes.

9. (Currently Amended) A computer-usable medium having computer-readable program code embodied therein for causing a computer system to perform a method of error protection in a network environment, said method comprising:

utilizing a link to establish communication between at least two communicating nodes in a network;

realizing ~~detecting an a~~ data error during communication between said at least two communicating nodes in a network, said nodes separated by a link;

providing an error indicator at said link when said data error is detected;

utilizing a blocking agent at said link to block ~~blocking further~~ communication between said at least two communicating nodes in response to said error indicator detected error;

providing a clearing indicator at said link when said data error is resolved; and

utilizing said blocking agent to unblock ~~[[unblocking]]~~ said blocked communication between said at least two communicating nodes in response to said clearing indicator~~[[,]]~~ ~~provided said communicating nodes have resolved said detected error, wherein said communication between said nodes is re-enabled; and~~  
~~setting a link-usage indicator in a first storage element by reach of said communicating nodes prior to communication therebetween, and wherein each of said communicating nodes has a corresponding position in said first storage element, and wherein said link-usage indicator set by each of said nodes is relative to said corresponding position in said first storage element.~~

10. (Canceled)

11. (Currently Amended) The computer-usable medium of Claim 9 further comprising:

~~wherein said detection of said error causes a generation of an~~ utilizing an error bit as said error indicator; said error indicator stored in a second storage element.

12. (Currently Amended) The computer-usable medium of Claim 11 wherein said method of error protection further comprises: ~~activating a~~

utilizing a link barrier as said blocking agent to provide said blocking of said communication between said at least two communicating nodes; said blocking agent activated in response to said generation of said error indicator.

13. (Currently Amended) The computer-usable medium of Claim 9 further comprising:

~~wherein said resolving of said detected~~ data error is performed by at each of said at least two communicating nodes;

generating said clearing indicator at each of said at least two communicating nodes; and

providing said clearing indicator to said link from each of said at least two communicating nodes, and is in a manner appropriate for each node.

14. (Currently Amended) The computer-usable medium of Claim 9 wherein said method of error protection further comprises generating multiple clearing indicators by said at least two communicating nodes, wherein each of said at least two communicating nodes generates one of said multiple clearing indicators subsequent to its said resolving of said error, wherein each of said clearing indicators corresponds to an associated corresponding position relative to said at least two communicating nodes,

and wherein each of said clearing indicators resets a link usage indicator set by each of said at least two communicating nodes.

15. (Currently Amended) The computer-usable medium of Claim 9 wherein a [[said]] first storage element and a second storage element are disposed [[in]] at said link, said first storage element and said second storage element for maintaining a real-time error status of said at least two communicating nodes.

16. (Currently Amended) The computer-usable medium of Claim 9 wherein a [[said]] first storage element and a second storage element are disposed [[in]] at each of said nodes, said first storage element and said second storage element for maintaining a real-time error status of said at least two communicating nodes.

17. (Currently Amended) A computer system in a computer system network, said computer system comprising:

a communication interconnect;

an optional display device coupled to said communication interconnection;

a memory unit coupled to said communication interconnect; and

a processor coupled to said communication interconnect, said processor for executing a method of error protection in a network environment, said method comprising:

utilizing a link to establish communication between at least two communicating nodes in a network;

realizing detecting an a data error during communication between said at least two communicating nodes in a network, said nodes separated by a link;

providing an error indicator at said link when said data error is detected;

utilizing a blocking agent at said link to block blocking further communication between said at least two communicating nodes in response to said error indicator detected error;

providing a clearing indicator at said link when said data error is resolved; and

utilizing said blocking agent to unblock [[unblocking]] said blocked communication between said at least two communicating nodes in response to said clearing indicator[[,]] provided said communicating nodes have resolved said detected error, wherein said communication between said nodes is re-enabled; and

setting a link usage indicator in a first storage element by reach of said communicating nodes prior to communication therebetween, and wherein each of said communicating nodes has a corresponding position in said first storage element, and wherein said link usage indicator set by each of said nodes is relative to said corresponding position in said first storage element.

18. (Canceled)

19. (Currently Amended) The computer system of Claim 17 further comprising:

~~wherein said detection of said error causes a generation of an~~ utilizing an error bit as said error indicator, said error indicator stored in a second storage element.

20. (Currently Amended) The computer system of Claim 19 wherein said method of error protection further comprises: ~~activating a~~

utilizing a link barrier as said blocking agent to provide said blocking of said communication between said at least two communicating nodes, said blocking agent activated in response to said generation of said error indicator.

21. (Currently Amended) The computer system of Claim 17 further comprising:

~~wherein said resolving of said detected data error is performed by at each of said~~ at least two communicating nodes;

generating said clearing indicator at each of said at least two communicating nodes; and

providing said clearing indicator to said link from each of said at least two communicating nodes, and is in a manner appropriate for each node.

22. (Currently Amended) The computer system of Claim 17 wherein said method of error protection further comprises generating multiple clearing indicators by said at least two communicating nodes, wherein each of said at least two communicating nodes generates one of said multiple clearing indicators subsequent to its said resolving of said error, wherein each of said clearing indicators corresponds to an associated corresponding position relative to said at least two communicating nodes, and wherein each of said clearing indicators resets a link usage indicator set by each of said at least two communicating nodes.

23. (Currently Amended) The computer system of Claim 20 wherein a [[said]] first storage element and a second storage element are disposed [[in]] at said link, said first storage element and said second storage element for maintaining a real-time error status of said at least two communicating nodes.

24. (Currently Amended) The computer system of Claim 21 wherein a [[said]] first storage element and a second storage element are disposed [[in]] at each of

said nodes, said first storage element and said second storage element for maintaining a real-time error status of said at least two communicating nodes.